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INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

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Action SS
Info

:BHNWVZCZCMJA151JIA737
PP RUEHC
DE RUMJIR 29076 1791440
ZNY CCCCC
P R 281156Z JUN 67
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY
INFO RUMTBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
RUHHMA/CINCPAC
RUMJFS/AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
STATE GRNC
BT

024306

1967 JUN 28 PM 12 27

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 29076

LYNDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF SAIGON 28415

1. told EMBOFF JUNE 26 THAT SUPPORTERS OF TRAN VAN HUONG HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH BIG MINH AND THAT BIG MINH HAS AGREED TO THROW HIS SUPPORT TO HUONG IF HE IS DENIED PERMISSION TO RETURN TO VIET NAM. ASKED HIS

b-1 ed

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OPINION OF MINH'S REQUEST TO RETURN, SAID THAT IT IS OF COURSE MINH'S CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT. HE ADDED THE THOUGHT THAT MINH'S RETURN WOULD NOT DIVIDE MILITARY ANY MORE THAN REFUSAL BY KY OR THIEU TO ALLOW HIS RETURN. ALSO SAID THAT MINH'S CANDIDACY SHOULD HELP THE CIVILIAN CANDIDATES.

2. COMPLAINED THAT KY IS USING THE POLICE TO INTIMIDATE HUONG SUPPORTERS. HE EXPLAINED THAT IF A HUONG CADRE GOES TO THE DELTA HE IS STOPPED, ASKED HIS BUSINESS, REQUIRED TO SHOW HIS PAPERS AND QUESTIONED ABOUT HIS ACTIVITIES. PEOPLE HE VISITS ARE ALSO SUBJECTED TO SUCH QUESTIONS BY THE POLICE. ALTHOUGH THE POLICE TAKE NO FURTHER ACTION, THE RESULT IS INTIMIDATION OF POTENTIAL HUONG SUPORTERS. SAID THAT IF THIS KIND OF TACTIC IS CONTINUED SEVERAL OF THE CANDIDATES HAVE AGREED TO ISSUE A JOINT STATEMENT OF PROTEST AND WITHDRAW FROM THE RACE SIMULTANEOUSLY.

(1)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY [illegible] DATE 10/1/[illegible]
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

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3. [redacted] SAID THAT NUONG IS NOT CONCERNED ABOUT EQUAL FACILITIES. HE DOES NOT NEED TV APPEARANCES OR AIRPLANE TRIPS. HE THEREFORE WILL NOT ATTEND THE JULY 1 MEETING OF ALL CANDIDATES PROPOSED BY KY AND HE MAY WELL SPEND THE ENTIRE CAMPAIGN IN VUNG TAU. ASKED IF THIS WOULD BE ONE WAY OF UNDERLINING HIS IMAGE AS A MAN OF INTEGRITY WHO IS ABOVE RUNNING AFTER VOTES [redacted] SAID YES. HE SAID THAT, FOR EXAMPLE, NUONG WAS REFUSED TO SEE TRI QUANG EVEN THOUGH TRI QUANG ASKED REPEATEDLY FOR AN INTERVIEW. TRI QUANG FINALLY SAW MAI THO TRUYEN WHO WAS "VERY HARD" WITH HIM. ACCORDING TO [redacted] IF TRI QUANG SUPPORTS NUONG IT IS ALL RIGHT WITH NUONG, AND IF NOT, THAT IS EQUALLY ALL RIGHT. b-1 ed

4. [redacted] ALSO EXPLAINED NUONG'S CONTINUED PRESENCE IN VUNG TAU BY SAYING THAT NUONG IS AFRAID OF ASSASSINATION AND HE IS AFRAID TO COME TO SAIGON BY ROAD. HE IS "50 PERCENT AFRAID OF THE VIET CONG AND 50 PERCENT AFRAID OF "

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THE GOVERNMENT". [redacted] EXPLAINED THAT NUONG THINKS THE VIET CONG WOULD LIKE TO KILL HIM AND BLAME THE GOVERNMENT AND LOAN WOULD ALSO LIKE TO KILL HIM AND BLAME THE VIET CONG. HE SAID THAT NUONG WILL ONLY COME TO SAIGON BY AIR, AND SO FAR IT HAS PROVEN IMPOSSIBLE TO RENT AN AIRPLANE. "

5. [redacted] ASKED EMBOFF ABOUT RUMOR THAT THE US IS SUPPORTING NGUYEN CAO KY. WHEN EMBOFF SAID US SUPPORTS NO CANDIDATE, ONLY FREE ELECTIONS, [redacted] SAID THAT PAC MEMBER (AND REPORTED MEMBER OF KY'S CENTRAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE) NGUYEN THIEN NHON IS MAKING TRIPS TO THE DELTA [redacted] NHON THEN URGES THEM TO SUPPORT KY, SOMETIMES THREATENS OFFICIALS WITH REMOVAL IF THEY DO NOT AGREE TO DO SO. b-1 ed

6. [redacted] ASKED ABOUT NUONG'S PLATFORM, [redacted] SAID THAT HE IS WRITING IT AND WILL PROVIDE US WITH A COPY. HE SAID THAT IT WILL BE BASED ON THE ISSUES OF WAR AND ed

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PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE. [redacted] EMPHATICALLY DENIED THE ed

3- SAIGON 29076, JUNE 28

TRUTH OF RUMORS THAT HUONG IS CONSIDERING NEGOTIATING WITH THE LIBERATION FRONT. HE SAID THAT FRONT MEMBERS COULD SIT WITH THE NVN DELEGATION IN ANY FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS, BUT THAT HUONG WOULD NEVER RECOGNIZE THEM ALONE.

7. COMENT: A. JUDGING FROM [redacted] COMMENTS, HUONG AS WELL AS KY AND THIEU HAS AT LEAST BEEN THINKING ABOUT THE POSSIBLE ADVANTAGES OF BIG MINH'S RETURN TO VIET NAM.
B. ALTHOUGH HUONG AND OTHER CANDIDATES MIGHT PULL OUT OF THE RACE IF THEY THOUGHT THEIR CHANCES HOPELESS, WE DO NOT THINK THAT THEY WILL DO SO OTHERWISE. AT THE MOMENT THIS IS CERTAINLY NOT THE CASE.
C. [redacted] EXPLANATION OF HUONG'S CONTINUED PRESENCE IN VUNG TAU IS LESS THAN CONVINCING. OBVIOUSLY HE COULD BE ASSASSINATED ALMOST AS EASILY THERE AS ON THE ROAD TO SAIGN. WE HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT HUONG SIMPLY PREFERS TO REMAIN IN VUNG TAU AND LET THE WORLD COME TO HIM.
D. [redacted] SUGGEST THAT HUONG AND TRUYEN ARE

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THINKING ABOUT PROPOSING DURING THE CAMPAIGN THAT THEIR GOVERNMENT WOULD ENTER INTO DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE NLF. HUONG'S SON, TRAN VAN DINH, TOLD EMBASSY OFFICERS JUNE 22 THAT HIS FATHER PROBABLY WOULD COME OUT WITH SOME SUCH PROPOSAL DURING THE CAMPAIGN. DESPITE [redacted] DENIAL, WE SUSPECT THAT HUONG IS AT LEAST CONSIDERING SUCH AN ANNOUNCEMENT AS A CAMPAIGN ISSUE.

BUNKER
BT NOTE: PASSED S/S-O AT 3:18 PM 6/28/67
PASSED WHITE HOUSE, DOD, CIA, USIA, NSA AT 3:55 PM 6/28/67